

FRIENDS OF *SESTINA*

SESTINA MUSIC IS A NORTHERN IRELAND REGISTERED CHARITY, No. NIC100067

NEWSLETTER FOUR JULY 2015

Dear Friends,

The April course preparing the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1610* and the wonderful performances we gave in Armagh, Belfast and Dublin are all over and before we can turn around, Sestina is in full flood, preparing for a performance in the Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School in Armagh in August and then another course, this time, a Bach programme in the first week of September! Wonderful for us and, I hope, for you too as Friends of Sestina. I've put a few of the accolades we received for the Venetian Festival in the newsletter and you'll be pleased to know we had excellent audiences in Armagh and Dublin, and Belfast was a complete sell-out. My apologies to those who were held up in the entrance to the Museum in Belfast; we got that wrong and have taken steps to ensure you're not kept out in the cold again. While I'm in apology mode, a number of you have commented about the Friends of Sestina and what we provide. Hand on heart, the Friends sounded like a good idea when we started it last year and lots of other groups do it; but we hadn't really thought through the implications. The Friends group has now grown to 17 members and we'd like to make it better and look after you properly.

SO

on FRIDAY AUGUST 14TH FROM 7PM UNTIL 9PM, we invite you to an open evening for the Friends of Sestina at Ulster Museum where I, Mark Chambers, Jim Kelley and some of the other Sestinas will discuss Friends provisions with you, sing a few pieces and look forward to the future. The bar will be open to provide refreshments. If you can't make it, let me know your views and I'll put them forward.

One of things we need to address is where Sestina is going. As you know, we've been primarily a training group, bringing together talented local young performers to work with some of the best players in the world for a week at Easter and again in September, culminating in performances of masterpieces in lovely places. Occasionally we've come together for other recitals like the Seamus Heaney celebration with the Ulster Orchestra eighteen months ago. The Sestina Principals,

including me, are now coming to the end of their academic courses and need to look forward to their careers in music. There are also excellent young singers coming behind us of course. Mark Allport of Exitex Ltd and our own Mark Chambers would like to see us working here rather than losing us to careers across the water and so we are trying to put together a permanent professional Ensemble which will perform in festivals, tours, recitals, a Christmas event and so on, all supported by a staffed office rather than frantic volunteers! What do you think? It will take planning, time and of course, money. A group of us are approaching some Trusts in September and any help or advice you could give would be gratefully received.

As before, I've put some news of our various Sestina Singers and Players in the Newsletter together with our forthcoming events and I look forward to seeing you at least at some of our recitals and especially our Friends evening on 14th. August. Sestina will be part of the opening Concert in the Charles Wood Festival in Armagh's Church of Ireland Cathedral on 23rd. August, 2015 which also hosts the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition. Our September Bach programme will be wonderful, and as before, we'll be running masterclasses on Saturday for adults and children. We will be giving a Christmas recital this year, which we hope will become a regular part of our programme. We hope to visit a different church each year supported by clergy from the various denominations; this year, 2015, we're going to make it a traditional Lessons and Carols Service with an enlarged choir and perhaps including a school group.

Finally I'd like to thank Arts Council NI and particularly Brona Whittaker of Arts & Business NI for their continued support. We've approached Belfast City Council for assistance and received positive responses, so fingers crossed for the future. As ever, many thanks to Mark and Oonagh Allport of Exitex Ltd, Dundalk, for being very special Friends and supporters of our work. Last, but by no means least, thanks to you for all your support. Please come to the Friends evening and I look forward to seeing you at one of the recitals!

FIONA FLYNN
SECRETARY, FRIENDS OF SESTINA

SESTINA SINGERS' NEWS

SOPRANOS

Since our last project, our members have been keeping busy. **EMER ACTON** performed as Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* for the Durham Opera Ensemble. **FIONA FLYNN** has just graduated with a masters in Vocal Performance from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She has become a member of the baroque Kellie Consort and is looking forward to collaborations with the Dunedin Consort. Fiona will be singing in a performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* in the Royal Albert Hall in September and will join NI Opera for Puccini's *Turandot* in the Opera House in October. **CAROLINE JONES** has been teaching in the Causeway School of Music, Coleraine, in Bellaghy Primary and as a tutor of Kodaly musicianship with the Belfast Phil Kids. She was the soprano soloist in Armagh City Choir's performance of Mozart's *Requiem* and has performed in recitals throughout the summer with Fiona. Caroline will be completing further training in Kodaly at the NYCoS school this summer. **SARAH RENNIX** is now an education officer for the Sixteen and **SINEAD O'KELLY** has completed her first year of Masters at the Royal College of Music. She made her solo debut at the Royal Festival Hall and the Wigmore. Hall and sang the role of Persephone for the world premiere of John Barber's new opera, *Sevens Seeds* at the Royal Albert Hall.

ALTOS

LAURA LAMPH is singing with Polyphony, Philharmonia Voices and Britten Sinfonia Voices, London Voices and The Erebus Ensemble. She is currently working at a choral course in France, where as well as teaching, she is cooking and making cocktails! In September she is managing the Kensington Olympia Festival of Music and Arts showcasing some of the UK's finest young musicians. Upcoming projects include performing as a soloist with Kilkenny Camerata and Chamber Choir Ireland in Bach's *B Minor Mass* in August. She will be flying to Bremen in September to perform Mozart's *Requiem* with the Dunedin Consort. **LAURA MCFALL** is studying Kodaly in Hungary for the summer and has just become one of NI Opera's Young Artists for 2015. She will sing in NI Opera's upcoming production of Puccini's *Turandot*. **JOSEPH ZUBIER** has been offered a music scholarship to Winchester College and **DAVID LEE** has accepted a place to study

with a choral scholarship at King's College, London and has been singing with All the King's Men.

TENORS

MATTHEW KEIGHLEY has been singing as a choral scholar at Lincoln Cathedral and will be returning to Gloucester Cathedral as a lay clerk in September. He has been involved in performances of Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Magnificat*.

MATTHEW LONG has just released his first solo album called *Till the Stars Fall* and **GLENN MURPHY** has been singing with the UCD Choral Scholars and is currently preparing to record with them for Signum Records.

BASSES

AARON O'HARE has just completed his masters at the Royal Northern and is returning to study for a Post-Graduate Advanced Diploma. He performed in the premiere of Brian Irvine's *Lovegolflove* at the Irish Open and has just finished the season singing in the chorus at the Buxton Opera Festival. Aaron will be competing in NI Opera's Festival of Voice in August. Good luck Aaron! **BRIAN McALEA** has just graduated from Oxford with a degree in music and was awarded a scholarship for a Masters in Vocal Performance at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He has returned from Bavaria where he performed the solos in Brahms' *Requiem* with the Blenheim Singers. He sang in a concert in the Sistine Chapel in Rome and has recorded a disc of John Blow anthems with New College featuring as a soloist.

MICHAEL HONG has been singing as a choral scholar at St. Georges, Belfast and has performed with the Ulster Youth Choir and the National Youth Training Choir. He also won the Junior Repertoire prize and bursary at Ballymena Festival.

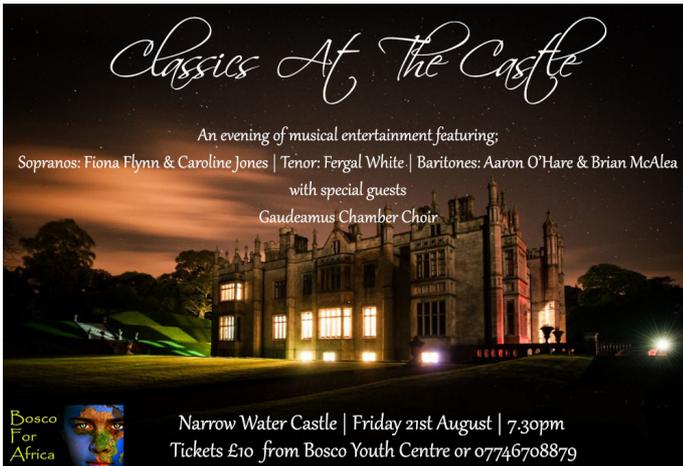
DIRECTOR

Our Director **MARK CHAMBERS** has been extremely busy preparing all things Sestina on top of a hectic performance career! He has taken up a voice lecturer post in the University of Birmingham. Future projects for Mark include Avro Pärt concerts in Copenhagen and Stuttgart with Theatre of Voices, *Mass in B Minor* at the Kilkenny Festival with IBO and Chamber Choir Ireland, performances of *Lassus Lagrime di San Pietro* in Oslo with Gallicantus, concerts of Brahms and Bruckner with Tenebrae, and Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in Paris and Utrecht with Johannes Leertouwer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CLASSICS AT THE CASTLE

NEXT SUMMER, I WILL BE TRAVELING TO TANZANIA, AFRICA WITH A LOCAL CHARITY GROUP. I HAVE ORGANISED AN EVENING OF MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT FEATURING 4 OF THE SESTINA PRINCIPALS AND A LOCAL CHAMBER CHOIR, GAUDEAMUS.



FRIDAY 21ST AUGUST, 2015 AT 7.30PM

NARROW WATER CASTLE, WARRENPOINT

BAR AVAILABLE FROM 7PM

TICKETS £10 AVAILABLE FROM:

CALL: 07746708879

VISIT: BOSCO YOUTH CENTRE, NEWRY

CHARLES WOOD FESTIVAL OF MUSIC AND SUMMER SCHOOL

JOIN SESTINA AS THEY PERFORM AT THE OPENING CONCERT OF THE FESTIVAL WITH FRENCH ORGANIST ERWAN LE PRADO.

SUNDAY 23RD AUGUST, 2015 AT 8PM

CHURCH OF IRELAND CATHEDRAL,
ARMAGH

TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM:

ARMAGH VISITOR CENTRE

CALL: 02837521800

ONLINE:

WWW.ARMAGH.CO.UK/CHARLES-WOOD

VISIT:

WWW.CHARLESWOODSUMMERSCHOOL.ORG

FOR MORE DETAILS ON THE FESTIVAL.

KEEP YOUR EYES OUT:

NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS IN BELFAST AND ARMAGH CATHEDRAL IN THE WEEKS BEFORE CHRISTMAS. WE'LL BE LOOKING FOR READERS AND WILL BE PERFORMING TRADITIONAL CAROLS AS WELL AS LESS WELL-KNOWN PIECES.

MEIN FREUND IST MEIN - MY BELOVED IS MINE

MUSIC OF LIFE AND DEATH BY THE BACH FAMILY

Sestina present semi-staged performances of musical masterpieces from the Bach dynasty. Ranging from the early Easter cantata *Christ lag in Todes Banden* (Christ lay in death's bonds) by Johann Sebastian Bach to the large scale wedding cantata by Johann Christoph Bach (JS Bach's great-uncle) *Meine Freundin du bist schön*. These works will be woven together by the solo violin of guest Johannes Leertouwer (ex leader of the Netherlands Bach Society and director of Nieuwe Philharmonie Utrecht) playing the iconic *Sarabande* and *Chaconne in D Minor*, with choral interpolations by Helga Thoene. Sestina are delighted to welcome back two former guests; tenor Thomas Herford and director Thomas Guthrie, with whom Sestina staged Purcell's *King Arthur* in 2013 to critical acclaim.

To accompany Sestina's small ensemble of eight singers, we welcome some of the finest early music instrumentalists from Ireland and the UK.

<i>Musical Director and Counter tenor</i>	Mark Chambers
<i>Stage Director and Tenor</i>	Thomas Guthrie
<i>Soprano</i>	Fiona Flynn and Chloe Morgan
<i>Alto</i>	Laura Lamph
<i>Guest Tenor</i>	Thomas Herford
<i>Bass</i>	Aaron O'Hare and Brian McAlea
<i>Leader</i>	Johannes Leertouwer
<i>Violin</i>	Clare Duff, Colin Norrby and Carolyn Hall
<i>Viola</i>	Marja Gaynor and Lisa Dowdall
<i>Cello</i>	Natasha Kraemer
<i>Organ and Harpsichord</i>	Malcolm Proud

FRI 4TH SEPT 19.30 ST PATRICK'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, ARMAGH
TICKETS: ARMAGH VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE +44 28 3752 1800

SAT 5TH SEPT 19.30 THE ULSTER MUSEUM, BELFAST
TICKETS: £15 AND £10 CONCESSION AVAILABLE FROM VISIT BELFAST +44 28 9024 6609 AND
THE ULSTER MUSEUM BOX OFFICE +44 28 9044 0000

SUN 6TH SEPT 20.00 ST ANN'S CHURCH OF IRELAND, DAWSON ST, DUBLIN
TICKETS: TBC

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RESERVE TICKETS FOR OUR SEPTEMBER PROGRAMME, PLEASE LET
ME KNOW. AS A FRIEND, WE OFFER YOU TWO COMPLIMENTARY TICKETS.

SESTINA

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A SELECTION OF COMMENTS ON THE VENETIAN FESTIVAL, APRIL 2015

Dear Mark

Many thanks again to you. I so much enjoyed the Vespers performances and it was a great delight to be the old Paula-Fred-Frances team again! I also appreciated the whole breadth of your project with Sestina and how it touched many people and the wider community; I thought the whole of Sunday's events were splendid and you sang beautifully too. I also appreciated the efforts that went into everything running so smoothly, down to details like adequate lighting on the music stands and the beautifully prepared score.

Frances Kelly Double Harpist

Hi Mark,

I'm quite embarrassed it's taken me quite so long and hard to know where to start, really! I enjoyed the week so enormously. You have an absolutely fantastic group of people there, which bodes incredibly well for the future, both in NI and for the profession generally. I so enjoyed meeting them, and hearing them work - it was a busy week, but their (and your) energy, commitment and dynamism is incredibly infectious and I left on Monday morning feeling revived in many many ways. That such a high proportion of them could very conceivably go on to top careers is testament to the work you do with them.

It was also a huge pleasure to work with you - your calmness was little short of miraculous in the face of the kinds of things that other organisations have extended staffs to deal with! This is music that you obviously feel so deeply and love so dearly, and you transmitted that clearly, inspiringly and fascinatingly. The final product was of a staggeringly high standard and in many ways as good as any Vespers I've ever sung in. Mustn't go on too much, but thank you so much. I hope it won't be the last time I come to work with Sestina and hope to see you soon in any case.

All very best, Nicholas Mulroy (Tenor Soloist)

Dear Mr Chambers,

Your Monteverdi was a real treat, as was *King Arthur* last year. What you do is remarkable and very much needed in Ireland, North and South (particularly North!) The correct performance of early music has long been neglected here, or only sporadically attained. My wife and I would like to support Sestina and note that there is a "Friends" support group. We would be glad to have details of this.

May we again compliment you on the Vespers. It was one of the most moving performances we have witnessed here in N I. We attended in the museum, which was fine, but next time I would wish to be in a church. We understand that the Armagh performance was most memorable.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course,

R Ian and Louise Stoupe (newly enrolled members of the Friends of Sestina)

Hi Mark

I thought the whole venture was absolutely splendid and culminated in a pretty unforgettable Vespers on Sunday evening. Warmest congratulations to you and all involved.

Regards,

Donal McCrisken (Continuo Harpsichord Soloist)

Dear Mark

Perhaps a little belatedly I'm writing to thank you for the recent project with Sestina and for inviting His Majestys to be a part of it. I know how much work something like this can be to set up (I ran Maj for more than 20 years) and how it feels when it looks as though nothing is ever going to be achieved, that it will all be

a waste of time and effort. But you triumphed and the project was a thrill and a delight: it was very refreshing to see young singers taking such pleasure and pride in their achievements and learning so much so quickly. And such a great band you got together; a privilege to be a part of.

We were incredibly well looked after; the family show was a true pleasure to play in; everything about the visit was just ... well, wonderful. Thank you Mark. This was a terrific achievement of yours, make no mistake about it. So good to meet your dad and to witness his pride too.

All my very best - Hope we can do more in the future,

Jeremy West (His Majestys Sagbutts & Cornetts)

Said to Jim Kelley by Michael Hong, one of our school-age Sestinas, after the Ulster Museum Vespers, with tears in his eyes.....

“THIS HAS BEEN THE BEST WEEK OF MY LIFE.....”

Business Address: 13 Aberfoyle Crescent South, Londonderry, BT48 7PF Tel: 07976 548 356

Sestina Music is supported by:



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